

May 27, 1930.

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APPARATUS FOR PRODUCING THEATRICAL ILLUSIONS

Filed Aug. 1, 1928

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

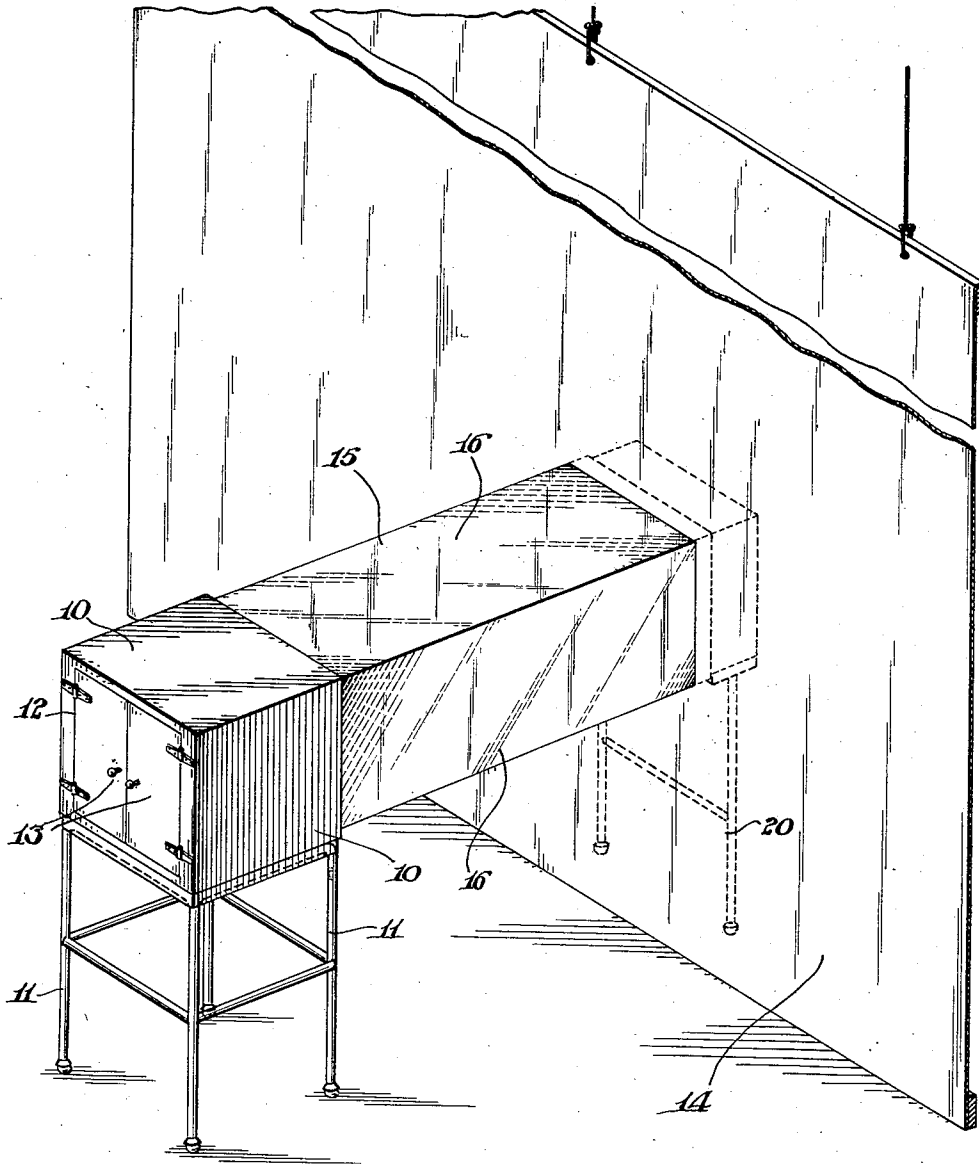


Fig. 1.

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Fig. 2.

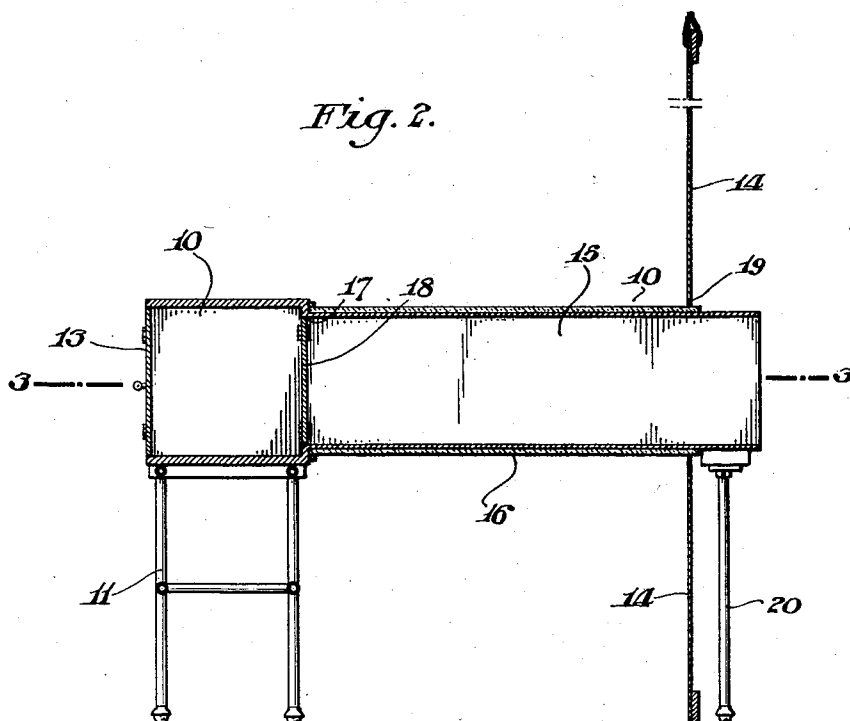
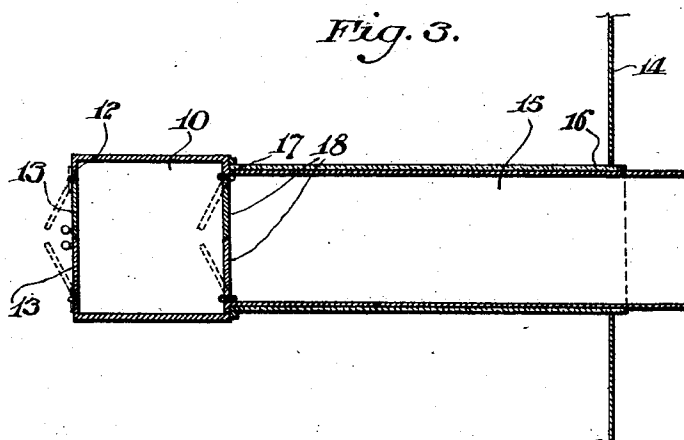


Fig. 3.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

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APPARATUS FOR PRODUCING THEATRICAL ILLUSIONS

Application filed August 1, 1928. Serial No. 296,758.

My invention relates to apparatus for producing theatrical illusions, and it relates more particularly to apparatus adapted to be used upon a theatre stage or the like, whereby a variety of mysterious and startling illusions may be produced for the entertainment of an audience.

The object of my invention is to provide apparatus for producing theatrical illusions whereby a variety of "magical" effects, such as the production, evanishment, transformation or exchange of persons, animals, or other objects, may be caused to take place in a seemingly isolated receptacle or cabinet.

The nature and characteristic features of my invention will be more readily understood from the following description, taken in connection with the accompanying drawings forming part hereof, in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of apparatus for producing theatrical illusions, embodying the main features of my present invention;

Fig. 2 is a vertical, central, sectional view thereof; and

Fig. 3 is a horizontal section thereof, taken approximately on the line 3—3 of Fig. 2.

Referring to the drawings, in the particular embodiment of my invention therein shown, 10 is a receptacle or cabinet suitably supported on a theater stage or the like by means of a skeleton framework 11. The receptacle 10 is provided with an opening 12, preferably in the front thereof, which opening may be closed by means of doors 13.

Arranged behind the receptacle 10, and apparently in separated relationship with respect thereto, is a back scene member 14, which may comprise a drop curtain or a scenery flat.

Extending from the back of the receptacle 10 to the back scene member 14 is a tube or chute 15, provided on its outer faces with mirrors 16. The mirrored faces 16 of the tube or chute 15 are arranged substantially at right angles to the back scene member 14.

The back of the receptacle 10 communicates, by means of an opening 17, with the interior of the chute 15. However, the existence of this opening is not known to the

spectators, and the same may be closed by means of doors 18 when the front doors 13 are open.

In some instances the doors 18 may be omitted, but it should be understood that in such cases, either the back end of the chute must be shielded from light, particularly that coming from the rear, or the stage behind the back scene member must be kept in absolute darkness, whenever the front doors 13 are open.

It will also be understood that for the best results the interior of the tube 15, and preferably the interior of the receptacle 10, should have a dead black surface, which may be obtained either by painting the same or by lining the same with black velvet or the like.

The tube or chute 15 may be constructed in any preferred manner. For example, the same may be made of boards having glass mirrors mounted on the outside thereof, or it may be made of metal with its outer surfaces silver or nickel plated, and polished.

The mirrored outer faces 16 of the tube 15 will serve to reflect the surface of the back scene member 14 so that the same will appear to the spectators to be continuous, and if desired, the back scene member may be ornamented in any preferred manner, to enhance the deceptiveness of the illusion, and to overcome any difference in appearance between the actual surface of the back scene member and the image thereof reflected in the mirrors.

While the tube or chute 15 is shown in the drawings as being substantially square in cross-section, it will, of course, be understood that the same may be of any preferred shape, so long as the surfaces thereof are substantially at right angles to the back scene member.

The tube or chute 15 affords a means of access from behind the back scene member 14 to the interior of the receptacle 10, the back scene member being provided with an opening 19 through which the tube 15 extends. The back end of the tube 15 may be supported by means of a framework 20, arranged behind the back scene member 14.

The operation of the apparatus will be quite apparent. For example, if it is desired to exchange one object for another, the front doors of the receptacle are opened, and the object to be exchanged is inserted in the receptacle, and the front doors then closed. One of the magician's assistants, being located behind the back scene member, will now remove the object which was inserted in the receptacle, and substitute another object therefor.

If a mere evanishment is to take place, the object is simply removed from the receptacle, and vice versa, if a production is to be accomplished, the article to be produced will be inserted from the rear into the receptacle, which has previously been shown empty.

In other instances, where the apparatus is used for the production, evanishment or exchange of living persons, the person or persons employed may readily pass through the tube or chute in one direction or the other, according to the effect desired.

It will be seen that there is thus provided simple and efficient apparatus for producing theatrical illusions, whereby a great variety of startling "magical" effects may be brought about. The apparatus is adaptable for use on an ordinary theatre or auditorium stage, and the same may be so constructed and arranged as to be readily set up and dismantled when moving from one theatre to another. The use of the apparatus also eliminates the necessity for cutting stage traps such as are often employed in effecting theatrical illusions.

It will, of course, be understood that the arrangement shown in the drawings is more or less schematic, and that the invention may be embodied in various sizes and forms, according to the illusionary effects to be produced, without departing from the spirit of my invention.

Having thus described the nature and characteristic features of my invention, what I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is:

Apparatus for producing theatrical illusions comprising a receptacle, means for supporting said receptacle in a seemingly isolated position upon a theatre stage, a back scene member arranged behind the receptacle and apparently separated therefrom, a tube extending from the receptacle to the back scene member, said tube having mirrors on its outer faces, the mirrored faces of said tube being arranged at right angles to the back scene member, the back scene member having an opening through which the tube extends thereby to permit access to the interior of the tube from behind the back scene member, the receptacle having an opening in the front through which objects may be inserted in and removed from said receptacle, doors for closing said opening, the receptacle also having an opening in the back for communication between the receptacle and the interior of the tube, and doors for closing said opening.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto signed my name.

FERGUS GREENWOOD.